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Preface

The following paper was presented at 12. WCCES Congress' Thematic Group No. 6: Social Inclusion – Gender, Ethnic and Migration. Havana, Cuba, 2004.

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1. Introduction

In the last thirty years we have seen a lot of changes in Nordic women's social and political citizenship, and the Nordic gender model has become a familiar concept in international research. According to Esping-Andersen (1990), the Nordic countries form a type of social democratic welfare regimes that differ from the liberal regimes found in for instance USA, Canada and Australia and the conservative or corporatist regimes found in for instance France and Germany (Esping-Andersen, 1990, Bergqvist et al 1999). Feminist researchers have emphasized the gender equality perspective in the Nordic model according to two dimensions:

1) The active/passive dimension expresses how the rights of citizens are institutionalized in modern democracies through participation, representation and power. This dimension describes the interplay between citizens, political institutions and social movements.

2) The public/private dimension expresses the relationship between the public and the private sphere and virtues (Turner, 1992; Siim, 2000, Christensen & Siim, 2001).

The Nordic gender model indicates the substantial common and homogenous development in women's relation to the public sphere in the Nordic countries, where there has been an inclusion of women in democratic institutions as well as a welfare policy characterised by an extensive social policy directed more or less to all sections of the populations.

But despite these common traits in the development of the women-friendly Nordic welfare states, recent research has highlighted central differences in the gender profiles in each of the countries. The specific Danish gender model has been a good foundation for creating a broad dialogue that includes new groups in the democratic community, and for democratic policy that puts everyday problems on the political agenda and ensures cohesion between the organizations of civil society and political institutions. In a Nordic perspective the Danish gender model is

the most "bottom-up" of all the countries. It means that it is the most responsive to changes and new ideas when they come about as a combination of pressure "from the outside" and from "the inside". However, without energetic movements or other types of active political communities with roots in everyday life and civil society that can interact with and challenge elite politics, the Danish model weakens (Christensen & Siim 2001; Bergqvist et al. 1999).

This paper focuses on the first dimension about the active/passive dimension in women's citizenship. I will discuss some of the key elements in women's mobilisation and democratic inclusion with emphasis on the construction of political identities.[1]

In the first part of the paper I discuss the formation and construction of the Danish gender model. The focus will be on the extensive changes in the Danish political culture and the women's mobilisation in the 1970s and the 1980s. In the second part of the paper I discuss this development in relation to current changes and challenges to the Danish gender model due to new forms of mobilisation/de-mobilisation as well as the construction of new political identities among young women of today.

2. Women's political mobilisation in the 1970s and 1980s

In Denmark as in many other western countries, the 1970s and 1980s were characterized by the formation of various social movements that challenged and made demands to the political institutions. These movements had a great impact on the mobilisation of women and on the development of the Danish Gender Model as the particular encounter between movements 'from below' and the political institutions 'from above' played a great role in the democratic process.

In order to understand the implications of women's mobilisation in this period, we have to be aware of the fact that different women's political identities emerged. Some of these identities were rooted in the women's movement (called the Redstockings), others arose from other movements

[1] I understand political identities as attitudes shared by individuals and groups, political institutions and values, and not least how they perceive their own role in and relations to them. Analyses of political identities therefore aim at understanding the processes where attitudes and values are created and changed in relation to individual citizens' everyday lives, the course of their lives, political experiences and political praxis (Christensen, 2004).

like the peace movement. Below, I will briefly explain the substance of these identities.

The second wave of women's movement started in 1970 and attracted mainly middle-class women, often with a connection to the universities. In her analysis of the Red Stockings, According to Drude Dahlerup the four most important factors of the movement are 'a radical, left-wing women's movement with women's community and women's struggle as its main strategy and the basis group as the main organisational principle' (Dahlerup 1998, I, p. 155).

The feminist project in the 1970s and 1980s was not concerned with accentuating differences between women; the main issue was women's community in autonomous women's organisations. According to Drude Dahlerup, this constitution of women as a group did not happen through a focus on experiences common to women in general (as mothers, for instance, or the traditional woman's role), nor through the assertion that women are all alike. It was rather the awareness that all women – irrespective of social class – were oppressed in relation to men of the same social class. Inequality, discrimination, and oppression were considered to affect all women alike, and, therefore, also were the principal justification both for an autonomous organisation of women and of the confrontational stance vis-à-vis patriarchal society (Dahlerup 1998, II, p. 399).

The women's peace movement

In the 1980s, more or less at the same time as mobilisation within the women's movement was declining, the peace movement was going through a process of reinvigoration – not only in Denmark, but in a number of Western European countries.[2] In Denmark, the ongoing political mobilisation stirred the old peace organisations from their slumber at the same time as a number of new peace organisations saw the light of day. The most important new movement organisations were Women for Peace, which only admitted women, and No to Nuclear Weapons, which was open to both sexes. Another significant difference between the two movement organisations was that while members of No to Nuclear Weapons were typically young people getting an education, the members of Women for Peace were generally middle-aged, often mothers, and a relatively large proportion was part-time workers and women who worked solely in the home (Christensen, 1991).

Despite the fact that Women for Peace was an autonomous women's movement, contact with the new women's movement was limited. Activists within Women for Peace were not mobilised on the basis of a radical feminism, but rather on women's traditional experiences with family life and motherhood. This was particularly evident in the symbolic and cultural forms of expression used by the movement. For instance, the local groups were designated 'kitchen groups', the national periodical the 'Kitchen Roll', and the local Aalborg bulletin the 'Potholder'. Many analogous symbols were employed with reference to their other activities, like 'hanging out the washing' ceremonies. In Women for Peace, the autonomous women's organisation is not considered an end in itself, more as a means to create a space for women (including the politically unschooled) to become active.

Apart from the women in Women for Peace and No to Nuclear Weapons, there was group of young, radical feminists in the women's peace movement in the 1980s. These women identified with the liberation feminism of the new women's movement, but felt drawn to the peace movement. For this group, the violence and oppression represented by the military was inextricably bound up with society's patriarchal structures. Similarly, peace and freedom were inextricably bound up with the cessation of women's oppression.

It is clear then that the new peace movement consisted of several different groups of women who all constructed different political identities based on their specific connection to everyday life as well as to political goals and visions. The characteristics of the three groups may be summarised as follows (cf. also Christensen, 1991):

- A group of women who, like men, are intent on influencing the political decision-making process and developing an alternative, progressive expertise. The groups set great store by influencing opinion in general and establishing contact with politicians and experts. Women and men work side by side in the same organisations. These women are organised in particular in No to Nuclear Weapons.

- A humanitarian, ethically focused group predominantly mobilised around women's traditional experiences of the family. They want

to create a space for the mobilisation of many women on their own terms. Their political strategy is an autonomous women's community – not to evolve a feminist counter-culture, but to find room for as many women as possible. These women joined forces in Women for Peace.

- A radical feminist group that views peace and liberty as inseparable from women's suppression, which is ideologically close to feminist perspectives in the women's movement, but in the 1980s the prevailing practice in the peace movement is primarily the non-violence network. Their strategy is an autonomous women's community through which a feminist counter-culture and an alternative political practice related to peace issues may be developed.

These political identities are both grounded in major differences between the actors' everyday lives and life course, in contrast to goals and strategies within peace politics and the goals of women's politics. This diversity in political identities and political strategies are of central importance for an understanding of the democratic challenges created by the mobilisation of women and the new social movements.

The movements devised a variety of strategies for women's inclusion in democracy. This is true both in relation to the substance as well as the form of the policies. If we first examine the political content, the feminism of the women's movement made up the pivotal point, with a special emphasis on combining a radical feminism with leftist anti-capitalism. This was the movement's great strength, but it also presented the movement with a number of dilemmas. In reality, it was tension between the movement's class struggle theory on the one hand, and the theory and practice of women's struggle on the other that undermined the movement's strategy and stood in the way of the establishment of permanent alliances with others. Within the women's peace movement, although women's politics had less potency, the political basis was more inclusive. There was a great deal of open-mindedness towards the diversity of views and strategies in the peace effort, though, in contrast, dissension arose concerning the connection between the work for peace and feminism (Christensen & Siim, 2001).

To sum up the mobilisation of women in social movements in the 1970s and 1980s, was a crucial factor in the development of women's political integration and the formation of the specific Danish gender model. Overall, the movements contributed on the one hand to the development of the democratic citizenship which included women as active citizens and on the other hand to the formation of the Danish gender model, which is located in the intersection between movement politics 'from below' in the civil society and representative politics based in the political institutions 'from above'.

3. Current democratic challenges

Social movements come and go. 1990s and the first part of 2000s have been decades characterized by demobilization, a growing gap between elites and population, and by significant political fragmentation. For the democratic renewal and constructions of new political identities that emerged from the social movements in the 1970s and the 1980s, the 1990s and 2000s were turbulent decades as basic social, political and cultural conditions changed along with e.g. globalization, growing immigration and political integration in the European Community.

One of the current challenges is to understand the particular democratic profile that young people have developed. It is remarkable that political participation has generally decreased among young people, especially among young women. It seems as if there is a paradox in the young women's political identities. On the one hand they exhibit a lack of involvement in political communities and especially in political institutions. On the other hand they assign great importance to the norm of participatory democracy and active citizenship.

In the book *Fortællinger om identitet og magt. Unge kvinder i senmoderniteten* [Narratives on identities and power. Young women in late modernity] I investigated the lack of affiliation with the political institutions and established democracy among young Danish women (Christensen, 2003). The purpose was to go beyond figures and to highlight factors that are significant in the creation of the young women's political identities. The project was based on a qualitative analysis built on 15 narrative interviews with two very different groups of young women:[2]

[2] The young women are between 20-25 years of age. I am aware that the respondents are not representative of all young women in Denmark. My intension has been to grasp different political identities

1) Feminists involved in radical anti-globalization movements.
2) Female students who are not political active.

4. Different political identities

Even though both categories of young women are very critical of the political institutions, the impact of their non-identification with for instance political parties differs significantly. Basically they represent two opposite political identities among young women today.

In the following I will present these two different processes of political socialization and political profiles and afterwards discuss the impact on democracy as well as on the Danish gender model.

Sandra from the radical anti-globalization movement

First, we meet Sandra from one of the feminist groups in the radical movement in Copenhagen. Sandra's parents were brought up in working class families and were members of the Danish Communist Party. When they divorced, Sandra stayed with her mother, but her father has had the greatest influence on the formation of her political identity. For better and for worse. As one of the very active members of the Danish Communist Party and as a member of parliament, her father had big political ambitions on Sandra's behalf. When the Soviet Union dissolved, he reacted with sadness. In many ways Sandra has identified with and adapted her father's political visions, in other ways she has made fundamental breaks – for instance with the Communist Party and other political institutions as the basic principle for organization.

> "I joined Red Youth because my father recommended it (...) The party expected a lot of me – that I would move on to the Marxist-Leninist faction of the Communist Party and be active in the party. But I didn't want to (...) By coincidence we found a letter from the Party's central committee to some people in Red Youth that said that we had to be 'trained'. So we said: Well, we're out of here! And then we joined the autonomous group. And I really felt at home there."

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among young women who are not active in political institutions in order to go into depth with their formation of political identities.

Along with other feminists in the radical anti-globalisation movements, Sandra is a great example of Castells' *resistance identity*[3] (Castells, 1998). The point of departure is extensive criticism of and distance to the political system and the political institutions. They emphasize the formation of critical and radical movements in civil society with a cultural praxis that is characterized by a strong cohesion between social and political actions. The relation to 'the great community' is absent or very limited; instead they favour a specific political praxis that typically based in local or global hotspots. The militant actions and the absence of dialogue with political institutions means that this form of resistance identity breaks with the traditional Danish movement culture in several ways. Feminists in the movements prefer the independent women's organisations, both to avoid the traditional gender-based division of labour, and because sisterhood is seen as a central base in connection with militant actions. The attempt to integrate the feminist perspective in the movement's political content and praxis, for instance by coupling gender and anti-racism, and at the same time focus on obstructing macho tendencies and sexist symbols that seem to have very good conditions in radical movements.

Maren from the group of non-political active young women

Next we meet Maren, 23 and student teacher. Maren is not a member of a political party or a social movement. She is not politically active, nor is she particularly interested in politics. As far as political socialisation, Maren emphasizes that nobody has "told her what to think". Her parents raised her and her brother to find their own political standpoints. In other words, every opportunity existed, and her parents represented different sides of the political spectrum, but they never discussed politics very much at home – almost only in connection with elections. But the family never told each other who they voted for.

Overall, Louise's approach to politics depends a lot on what it means for her personally and what she can get out of it. Politics should be something she can identify with directly. But it should also touch on issues

[3] Castells talks about resistance identities as one of the central political identities available in the information society. Resistance identities are constituted as counter-discourses to the dominant identity discourse, primarily among potentially excluded and stigmatized groups in society. Castells describes this identity type as "the exclusion of the excluders by the excluded", and he ascribes it a fairly large potential for action and change (Castells, 1998:9).

that she can see have an impact on her daily life or future. She describes this individualistic attitude towards politics as follows:

> "But I also think that it is common for our generation that if it doesn't concern us why rebel against it? It's a hard thing to say, but I think that's the way it is. If they really started to make drastic cutbacks in my education as far as money and so on, then I would obviously think more about where I stand and get more involved than I am now".

Louise is one of several *politically non-active women*. Basically this group of young women supports representative democracy and the political institutions, and their conception of politics is fairly conventional. For instance they are critical of demonstrations and political actions that do not comply with the recognized forms of political behaviour. But in their identities, politics is a very low priority, and they only consider politics if they can combine it with other, e.g., recreational activities. The women also point out that if they were to become politically active some time in the future, the political activity would have to 'offer them something'.

5. Organizations for old men?

The analysis shows that the young women have several reasons for turning their backs on political institutions. For radical left-wing feminists it seems as if the break with the institutions forms a basic part of their political identities. This means that their dis-identification with the political parties, of which their parents typically have been members, is a central factor in their identity work. For other women, the institutions are more meaningless. They take them for granted. They do not, however, have an active relation to them, and, above all, they do not regard the institutions as useful or relevant in their political identity work.

We should be careful about interpreting young people's lack of affiliation with existing political institutions as a clear-cut expression of individualism. Who says the young people is the problem? It might also be the established institutions. Ulrich Beck has pointed out that young people today are involved in issues to which the established political institutions are incapable of relating. Therefore, a central part of the young people's individualisation process in modern society is to create their own alternative. This occurs through a dual strategy where they – while

distancing themselves from the institutions – build new self-organized forms of care for others. Beck uses the term '*freedom's children*' about modern youth. On the one hand he highlights the new meanings of freedom as a part of everyday praxis. On the other hand he problematises the abstract perception of freedom that is institutionalised in western democracies where we only talk about supporting political freedom, but we do not react to it actively (1998).

> "They [young people] hate organizations for their formalism and their convoluted and dishonest call for 'selfless' commitment, and they practise the kind of voting with their feet that was so profoundly underestimated some time ago (…) One of the days, people in Germany will also have to face up to the question of whether grandpa's mega-organizations will really be justified in their lament over the 'decline of values' when the last member resigns" (Beck, 1998:4).

Beck's thesis on young people's dual strategy is therefore a positive supplement or alternative to understanding their political identity formation. Like Castells he thinks that new, self-organized political communities first of all can break the limitations that were often imposed on individuality by the 'old' collective patterns. Second of all, they may prove fertile for alternative says to couple individualism and collectivism.

Concluding perspectives

The preconditions of the Danish gender political model have changed since the mobilisation in the 1970s and 1980s cemented women's active citizenship. The new preconditions are first and foremost a result of the fact that the close interconnection and interplay between politics 'from below' and politics 'from above' has changed fundamentally. Cohesion, division of labour and responsiveness have apparently given way to fragmentation and an absence of active participation. It also seems that more and more disparities arise between, one the one side, the demands, needs and visions formulated in movements and other organisations in civil society and, on the other side, political decision-making processes connected with representative democracy at the national as well as the global level.

If we look at the contours of the future through the young women, there are no indications that they will be the innovators of the political institutions 'from the inside'. Instead it appears that it is a choice between not being active at all or being active in new, self-organised communities.

In terms of understanding the challenges in the Danish gender model, it is important to make the diversity and complexity in current political identities visible. Because it appears that the correlation between individual life strategies and political communities is even more pronounced for modern young women than they were for the women who were active in the social movements in the 1970s and 1980s. Communities today are selected and rejected, and it is very clear that collective forums that are perceived as constraining for individuality are not active for young women of today.

The interaction between movement politics and representative politics appears to have changed. However, for the Danish democracy as well as for the Danish gender model it is very important to maintain the dynamic between these two elements. This depends on the ability to renew the political institutions so they can play an important role in the continued inclusion of women in democracy and in the making of political identities among not only elderly and middle-aged citizens, but also among young citizens of today.

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